

*Flora of Edinburgh; being a List of Plants found in the Vicinity of Edinburgh.* By J. H. BALFOUR, Professor of Botany. 12mo. Edinburgh: A. & C. Black. 1863.

*Flora of Marlborough: with Notices of the Birds and a Sketch of the Geological Features of the Neighbourhood.* By the Rev. T. A. PRESTON. 12mo. London: Van Voorst. 1863.

These two little books are published with a very similar object: they propose to assist the student in his search after plants,—in one case, the students of the University of Edinburgh, in the other the boys at the great school called Marlborough College. It is curious to remark that the schoolmaster aims at a higher standard when writing for his boys than the Professor when providing a book for his University students. Are we to deduce from this an idea of the relative mental attainments possessed by the two classes? We should be ashamed to make such a deduction. What, then, is the cause of the Professor giving us simply a list of plants, without any of the additional matter now expected from local floras, not even telling us in which counties his localities are placed; and the schoolmaster following the example set by our best modern local floras in all the respects admissible by the circumstances of his district? We make no attempt to answer the question.

Dr. Balfour's radius of twenty miles round Edinburgh traverses a rich country, offering much variety of soil and situation. He should have given a sketch of its geology, surface, and meteorology; and might well have divided it into several districts, and attempted a complete flora of each.

Mr. Preston has obtained from a friend an interesting outline of the geology of his area, has divided a circular space of six miles radius from Marlborough into four districts, and endeavoured to work out the botany of each. He has produced a book far more likely to be valuable to his readers than that of Dr. Balfour to the students of his class; for Mr. Preston's book is by much the more likely of the two to direct attention to matter other than the simple names of the plants. Doubtless, to the mere collector, each will prove of use, and fulfil their objects; and we hope that we may look upon the Flora of Edinburgh as the forerunner of a more elaborate and scientific work from the pen of its excellent and learned author.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

### ROYAL SOCIETY.

March 19, 1863.—Major-General Sabine, President, in the Chair.

“On Peculiar Appearances exhibited by Blood-corpuscles under the influence of Solutions of Magenta and Tannin.” By William Roberts, M.D., Physician to the Manchester Royal Infirmary.

THE object of the following paper is to give an account of certain observations which seem to indicate that the cell-wall of the verte-